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mammals. The accumulation of the latter would most certainly be of great benefit, but a large collection of the former would simply duplicate the museums of Philadelphia and Boston.

Our strictures are wholly due to a desire to awaken the directors of this museum to the importance of avoiding the errors of their predecessors. There is no reasonable excuse for a board of management which, at the present day, repeats the mistakes which have characterized the past history of all the museums with which we are acquainted, either in this country or Europe. We recommend especially to their perusal a short article upon the "Scientific Institutions of North America," by George Bentham in his Annual Address to the Linnæan Society, for 1867, and the various articles frequently published upon the proper management of museums and kindred topics in "Scientific Opinion" and "Nature."

Efforts are, however, being made to change this state of affairs, and we hope to report in our next notice that the American Museum is, in all respects, worthy of the name that it has taken, and of the city that should have a museum unequalled by any in the country.

NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANY.

BOTANY.

Fragaria Gillmani. — In a note on this plant by Mr. Gillman, page 312, it is stated that Dr. Asa Gray considers that the "well developed leaf on the scape, proves to be the distinguishing character of the species." It is not clear whether this refers to *F.* "*Mexicana*," or *F.* "*Gillmani*;" but to show that neither can lay claim to this character exclusively I enclose a leaf of *F. vesca*, in which are not only well developed leaves on the scape, but better developed leaves than I have yet seen on *F.* "*Gillmani.*"

In my note on *F.* "*Gillmani*" last year I stated that leaves on the scape, or flowers on the runners were poor characters to found species on, because a flower scape is nothing but an erect runner, and a runner but a viviparous scape. In this specimen, now sent, you will see this illustrated by the *rudiments of roots*, as well as leaves on the scape. — Thomas Meehan.

[We understand Dr. Gray to have remarked that all the specimens he has seen of Schlechtendal's *F. Mexicana* have leaf-bearing scapes, and that *F. Gillmani* is the same thing; and that he has no decided conviction as to whether it be the European *F. vesca* which has assumed this condition and habit in Mexico, or an aboriginal form, — which in either case is curious. — Eds.]

New Plants. — In my botanical rambles this last May two new plants came under my own observation. One of them which we have made known as *Viola erecta*, was found near Williamstown, Mass., and is a variety of *V. Selkirkii*, differing from that species in its larger size and in its leaves being strictly erect and not lying flat upon the ground. The other which was discovered at Binghamton, N. Y., and called by us *Geranium album*, has a white flower with yellow anthers and leaves, but little hirsute characteristics which mark it as a distinct variety of *G. maculatum*. — H. M. Myers, *Williamstown, Mass.*

Palms of the Sandwich Islands. — In the interesting popular account of palms, contributed by Dr. Seemann to the "Gardener's Chronicle," it is mentioned that three species of *Pritchardia* are known from these islands, namely, *P. Martii* and *P. Gaudichaudii* (briefly noticed by Martius under the name of *Livistonia*, from very imperfect materials furnished by Gaudichaud), " and an undescribed species enumerated by Horace Mann." It is farther noted that none of these species are yet introduced into cultivation. There is, however, no evidence to show that the palm noticed by the late Mr. Mann is different from one or the other, not to say both, of Gaudichaud's; and it is here well known that Mr. Mann brought a stock of seed of his palm, from which numerous young plants were raised both in this country and at Kew. Of these the best developed specimen known belongs to the collection of H. H. Hunnewell, of Wellesley, Mass.

The Irritability of the Stamens in the Barberry, according to Jourdain ("Comptes Rendus" April 25th), is suspended by chloroform. A bit of cotton sprinkled with chloroform, and introduced into the *glass* bell-glass which covered the plant operated on, produced tetanic rigidity of the filaments in one minute; but exposure to the air soon restored the irritability, unless the action of the chloroform had been continued ten or twelve minutes, in which case the vitality of the flowers was greatly impaired or destroyed. — *Academy.*

ZOOLOGY.

The Future of Natural Science. — We had heard it stated that henceforth physical discovery would be made solely by the aid of mathematics; that we had our data, and need only to work deductively. Statements of a similar character crop out from time to time in our day. They arise from an imperfect acquaintance with the nature, present condition, and prospective vastness of the field of physical inquiry. The upshot of natural science will doubtless be to bring all physical phenomena under the dominion of mechanical laws; to give them, in other words, mathematical expression. But our approach to this result is asymtotic; and for ages to come — possibly for all the ages of the human race — nature will find room for both the philosophical experimenter and the mathematician. — *Tyndall's notice of the "Life and Letters of Faraday" in the Academy.*